

Mens et Manus

*Prompts and
Circumstances - I*

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Mens et Manus by Darling (The_Collective)

Series: Prompts and Circumstances [1]

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Genre: Canon - Book & Movie Combination, Emotional/Psychological Abuse, Implied/Referenced Character Death, Mental Health Issues, Past Violence, Physical and emotional scars, Post-Canon, Self-Harm, Underage Drinking

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Characters: Andrea Uris, Ben Hanscom, Betty Ripsom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Donald Uris, Eddie Kaspbrak, Maggie Tozier, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris, The Losers Club (IT)

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Summary:

Stan looks at himself in the mirror; Richie talks to his mom; Mike starts listening; Ben finds a new hobby; Eddie moves out of his mom's house; Beverly starts dating; and Bill writes his first book.

a.k.a a series of short stories based on the prompt "Tell the story of a scar"

Tags will update as chapters are added. Chapters will be added on the order listed above.

1. Starman

*There's a starman waiting in the sky
He'd like to come and meet us
But he thinks he'd blow our minds
There's a starman waiting in the sky
He's told us not to blow it
Cause he knows it's all worthwhile
He told me:*

*Let the children lose it
Let the children use it
Let all the children boogie*

☆David Bowie - Starman☆

~*~

Stan Uris was exactly 21 days past his 13th birthday as he woke up just after midnight, screaming. For the 12th night in a row, Rabbi Donald Uris would come into his son's room and calm him down by holding him. The first two times Stan had woken in such a startling manner, Andrea had tried, thinking a motherly figure was what he needed. She couldn't have been more wrong. The sight of her in the doorway had brought Stan to hysterical tears.

He knew it hurt her, but he couldn't stand being held in her arms when *that woman* was so fresh in his mind. Holding him down, latching her rows and rows of teeth into his head, her tongue leaving thick spittle as it explored his face.

He'd tell his friends in college that his first kiss left him shaking, and smile dryly, all the while remembering the feeling of It eating parts of him -- drawing his fear to the surface to slurp it up, and leave holes in his soul.

22 holes, to be precise. In two crooked rows, circling his face.

Though Stan hated lying to them, especially as his lies became more obvious, saying he fell in the bramble was still the most logical explanation for the wounds. So he was going to say it again. He was going to say it until he forgot it wasn't the truth.

After 5 minutes, Stan did not hear the bedroom door open down the hall. He did not hear his father's heavy footsteps (8-10 of them from door to door), nor his parents whispering. Asking each other if they should call a psychiatrist. There was only silence.

He burst into tears as it dawned on him that his parents weren't coming that night. Or any other night again. They'd had their fill of him. He pulled his blankets up to his chest and rolled over to his side. The moon peering through the window looked far too much like dead lights in the back of a monstrous throat -- the stars resembling rows and rows of sharp little teeth -- so he flipped over and stared at the bedroom closet. Stan cried for 13 minutes exactly, and then, after his face was stinging and his eyes could produce no more tears, he stilled. It took him 11 minutes to fall back to sleep.

The next morning, at 7am sharp, Stan looked in the mirror, and saw what his father must see: not a man, not a boy, but something that could barely be considered human. All the lies he'd told over the years plain as every scar, turning his face ugly.

I ate your candy, not Richie.

I wasn't looking at your magazine.

School was great.

I made a lot of friends today.

I fell.

I'm happy.

I do believe in God.

I'm practicing my reading every day.

It's not real.

I hate you.

I'm not afraid.

I fell in the bramble.

I'm not lying.

I'm okay.

He touched each tooth mark, and recited his lies in a quiet whisper. He went right to left, up to down to up again, and when he was done, he saw his face. Not man, not boy, but teenager. With brown eyes, dirty blonde curls, and a small, pleasant smile. He tried to hold that smile long enough to get to the breakfast table, but it fell away the minute he passed the window in the hall and saw his father's black Oldsmobile sitting in the driveway.

For Donald Uris to not already be on the road to the synagogue, he was either sick or something else was going on. Stan prepared himself, somehow knowing it wasn't going to be a very pleasant breakfast.

The table was quiet, though they were both sitting there with empty plates. Donald in his pants and button up shirt, and Andrea in jeans and a tee. They looked like they'd been up all night. His mother nursed a cup of coffee with bags under her eyes, and his father had aged twenty years in 12 hours. Stan felt a pang of guilt.

You did that. You and your false truths.

There were eggs and toast, so Stan filled his plate (3 scoops of eggs, 2 pieces of toast) and tried to go into the living room to eat. Donald cleared his throat, and Stan hesitated before dutifully sitting down across from his father, his stomach turning flips as he did so. He poked at his eggs, not sure he was hungry anymore.

"So, they found the Bowers boy last night, " Donald said. He and Andrea both looked hard at Stan, so he tried not to react. He wasn't surprised to hear Henry's body had finally popped up. The well led to

the sewers, which eventually would carry him to the Barrens, or the canal. It was only a matter of time. "Officer Nell informed me that he confessed to the murders right away. Butch, the Criss boy, the Huggins boy... the others." Stan wasn't hungry at all. He set his fork down, and looked at his parents. He couldn't keep the shock of hearing Henry was alive from his face, nor the thoughts from entering his mind.

How did Henry survive for 2 weeks in the sewers? What did he eat? What did he *drink*? Stan felt bad for him. Even if he was trying to murder Mike, Stan had seen into the dead lights, and somehow understood that Henry was just a puppet. A tool. A fool. A dancing clown, one could say, if they wanted to be punched in the throat.

"That's sad news," Stan said. It felt like he was speaking through cotton. There was something in their faces that concerned him. Suspicion. Knowledge.

They were seeing his lies unravel, but the truth inside was muddled and muddied. Still, he thrust his fists against the post, and insisted he saw no ghost. Bill be damned.

"You know they say he skinned the Huggins' boy face," Andrea said, her tone pointed. Stan swallowed a sip of water. He knew where she was going. It was wrong. Clever, but wrong. He still thought about caving in and taking the easy out, though; just agreeing with her clever little concoction. It was another lie, but one that would satisfy his parents growing unease that Stan had been accosted by more than foliage. "With that little knife of his."

Her eyes were measuring the scars, mentally comparing them to a switchblade. Stan felt them burning in her gaze, but dared not pick at them. Instead, he went for his cuticles, using his fingernails to press them down and tear them off.

"Seems to have had an obsession with faces," Donald said. His eyes bore into Stan, as if trying to see beneath the layers of his flesh and into his thoughts. "I remember when he attacked you that one winter. What was it, when you were 8? Rubbed snow in your face until--"

"Henry didn't attack me this time," Stan said. His voice was steady,

even as his head buzzed with panic. "I fell and--"

"Got so scared you're still having nightmares about it? Stanley," he sighed, rubbing his eyes. "That doesn't make sense."

"Honey, we're just concerned is all," Andrea said, forcing a smile. "Butch wasn't a nice man. He did bad things to Henry. And if Henry, in turn, did bad things to *you* -- if he hurt you in any way -- you can tell us. You're safe here."

Stan looked away. "I'm sorry, but no. He didn't. Even if you wish he did so you could pretend you're still being *persecuted*." He stood up after 27 seconds of silence. Were they really letting him finish his outburst? "I remember how much fun it was when I was 8 and getting to listen to you tell people about how you were being *tested*. I'm sure you'd love that again, but I'm not playing along. I fell, alright? I was doing something stupid, and yes, it frightened me, because it *hurt*!" His parents exchanged a glance. If Stan wanted to, he could decipher their silent conversation. But he didn't want to. He'd given them a lot to unpack, and their first thoughts were always going to be defensive, or accusatory. Let them think what they wanted, and say what they wanted. They were going to do that regardless. "I'm going to be late for school."

"Let me drive you," the Rabbi said. But Stan was already leaving. He grabbed his backpack from beside the door, his bike from the porch, and was gone before his father could protest. It took him 25 minutes to get to school, and he passed five florescent lights on the way to the bathroom, where he threw up what little remained of last night's ravioli. There were 8 and a half tiles between the stall and the sink. He counted his scars, and recited his lies, and...

Stan's brow furrowed. He leaned in, tilting his head so he could see the one, specific tooth mark. 22 scars, in 2 crooked rows, and one by itself near his temple. Small, almost unnoticeable. Unmatched. He tilted his head to the other side and confirmed there was no twin.

He leaned away from the mirror. He washed his hands. He turned to leave the bathroom. And then tilted his head in the mirror, looking at that one scar. How could a creature that changed appearance at will overlook such a detail? How could he, Stan, have missed it all

this time? In every examination of them?

Maybe it's new.

That couldn't be. Yet, he had counted them before and after the wrappings were removed. 22 scars. In two crooked rows. Not 23 with one little orphan. Where did it come from?

He ran his finger along it, feeling the rough scab that had formed over it. He scratched that off, not surprised to see puckered scar tissue underneath.

He couldn't just leave it like that for everyone to see. They'd notice it, too. The one that fell out of pattern. They'd notice and stare. He didn't want them staring anymore.

Taking his thumb nail, he tried pressing into the other side of his face, but he couldn't pierce the skin. He wound up with one vividly red scar, and the other, faded and white. Drumming his fingers on the side of the sink, he made a decision. He dug through his backpack until he found his school compass.

This is fucking crazy, he thought. Then, using the sharp point, he began digging in. Making a series of small, connected dots, Stan traced the shape and angle of the rogue tooth above his other temple. Each dot brought a bead of blood, which began leaking down his face, and into the sink. By the time he was done, Stan's hands were shaking. He cleaned the wound and his face, and then checked out his work. He was feeling better, until he realized that those two didn't match the others, who sat with a pair in two crooked rows.

This is fine. They both have one little straggler. Like a captain leading his troops.

Biting his tongue, Stan got back to work. He had just finished the final faux-tooth mark when he heard a scream from behind him. Little Edgar Booth was running out of the bathroom, his shriek loud and shrill. Stan looked at himself, covered in blood, and slowly put his compass to the old scars. He could already hear his parents in his head.

You did that to yourself? Maybe you did all of them yourself. Maybe you like all this attention.

He began to pick them open, one by one. They might not be able to tell any of them were new if they were *all* bleeding.

2. Changes

*I watch the ripples change their size
But never leave the stream
Of warm impermanence and
So the days float through my eyes
But still the days seem the same
And these children that you spit on
As they try to change their worlds
Are immune to your consultations
They're quite aware of what they're going through*

☆David Bowie - Changes☆

~*~

If you were to ask Richie “Trashmouth” Tozier if demons or ghosts were worse, he would tell you the answer was *ghosts*, hands down. No question. How does he know? He had once battled a demon. It was a surprisingly easy thing to do. He’d taken a Louisville Slugger and popped one right in It’s ugly, ugly kisser.

But the ghosts of Derry didn’t have physical bodies to destroy. They were untouchable. He’d once wondered if the ghosts were somehow Pennywise, but Stan and Mike never saw them. They existed in his brain, and unless he planned on destroying that, they weren’t going away anytime soon. They stood on every corner smoking stolen cigarettes, or passed him on the street, only a breeze as they sped by on their bikes. They were armless, legless, and glaring at him from every blue Trans Am. They were focused on Richie, blaming him, as they begged him to answer one simple question:

Why did *you* survive?

He didn’t know. He ran it by the Big Man every Sunday morning mass, and even Wednesday evening. He even asked it a few times on his knees beside his bed, hoping a more private conversation would lure out the truth. But either God was shy or had nothing to say,

because after five years, Richie still didn't have an answer.

Betty Ripsom's torso hung around as he turned and pulled down the metal door, locking up Freese's Department Store for the night. She never said much; she mostly stared. Today, she was crying. He hopped in his yellow Toyota, and just sat for a moment. He hoped to feel some kind of sense of relief that his day was over. He didn't. He felt just the same as he had that morning. So he turned on the radio, lit a cigarette, and sat back to listen to David Bowie lament over changes while Betty appeared in the passenger seat.

Time had changed them all. Between the three remaining Loser's, he was the only who actually looked like he'd grown any. Mike and Stan were taller and broader, but otherwise looked exactly the same as they did. Of course, as much as they didn't change physically, they were definitely touched by their experiences. They didn't know how to let it go, dwelled on it, and adopted obsessions over it; while Richie had a weekly schedule, a budget, and an actual job.

Somehow, in the twists and folds of time, he was everything he thought they'd be at his age, and they were everything he expected for himself.

"Life is full of chucks like that sometimes. Ain't it, Betty?" Richie asked. Betty only sobbed.

Richie dwelled on that for a moment. And then he drove. He grabbed some Moo Goo Gai Pan and Orange Chicken for dinner from the new Chinese food place, and then headed home. He grabbed the mail, and kicked the door shut. Betty was already inside, making the living room cold.

"Mom, I'm home!" Richie yelled across the quiet little four-bedroom home. His parents had bought it hoping to fill it up with daughters, laughter, and merriment. Then, Richie came out crooked, and the doctors told Maggie she couldn't carry another child. Now, he was stuck there with another type of ghost: the ones from people who never existed in the first place. "*MOOOM!* DINNER!"

Richie waited until he heard the bed down the hall creaking before moving to the kitchen. He unpacked the food boxes, dished up a

serving for himself, and then carried the mail with him to the living room. He turned on reruns of Dallas, and chewed his food without really tasting it. Betty sat in his father's chair. He tried to ignore her as she chattered on in his mind.

Your mom doesn't even like you, Betty said, staring deep into Richie. He could feel her eyes boring through skin. *It's not fair that an unwanted child who is wasting his life is allowed to keep it. I was going to go to Harvard. Have you read my essays? I was going to be an award winning journalist.*

He shuffled through the bills, and an advertisement for Motorola Beepers. *Beep beep Richie,* he thought, with a dry chuckle. His food didn't taste very good anymore, not that it was particularly outstanding before. He set it aside, along with the ad. It didn't stay there long. He needed something to occupy his mouth when it wasn't talking.

Finally, there was the rejection letter from the University of California.

Well, he presumed it was a rejection letter, just like all the rest. It *should* be a rejection letter. As Betty was agreeing – *you might have got good grades in high school, but that doesn't mean you'll survive college. But* Richie remembered the look in Stan's eyes as he went straight for that one brochure, honed in like a missile. They were wide and distant, seeing into a place Richie couldn't even fathom.

"This is the one," Stan had said, handing it to Richie. *"This is where you're going."*

"And leave you, dear Staniel? I think not!"

Richie hadn't even wanted to apply to something so far away. But when he refused to even consider it, Stan sent in the application himself. He was so fucking insistent... Richie tried to swallow two lumps of chicken at the same time. After coughing them back up, he picked the letter back up from the ground where it fell, and tore it open like it was Christmas. He dropped it again in disgust after reading only one word: Congratulations! And popped the chicken back in his mouth.

Betty grimaced.

Fucking Stan, was all Richie could muster. He couldn't even make himself be angry.

The couch sank in beside him. Maggie Tozier sat two beers down on the coffee table, already opened. She slid one over to Richie. He stared at it, and then gave his mom a cheesy smile, pretending it didn't exist.

"Hey pretty lady," Richie said to his mom. He gave her the 'Beverly look,' which he'd been practicing for years. A quick lick, a big smile, and his round eye falling into an easy wink, all released within milliseconds of each other. It took a surprising amount of concentration. "You come here often?"

Maggie Tozier's giggle was short, and filled with coughing. Richie's smile, fake to begin with, faltered. She brought her hand up to catch some spittle. Richie noted the red hue.

"How was your day?" she asked, wiping her hand on her pajama pants. She was sick all the time these days, but refused to go to the hospital. He didn't know if she wanted to die, or assumed she was somehow immortal. He didn't know if it mattered. The end results were the same.

Betty's humorless laugh took over her side of the room. He could just hear her saying, *oh this is great. Your mom won't even be grieving that long! My mom has seventy more years. Seventy!*

"It was fine," Richie answered. "I saw Mike today. I didn't get to talk to him, but, y'know... he *looks* healthy."

Maggie looked at him like she knew all the answers. She nudged the bottle she'd brought for him. Richie only looked at it.

"Have a drink. You'll feel better about it," she said, in her infinite wisdom.

Why not have a few, live a little? Betty's voice was dripping with sarcasm, and just a hint of sadness. *I'll never be able to.*

"Yeah, I know," Richie said, addressing both women at once. He put the letter down and picked the beer up. Maggie raised an eyebrow, and looked at the envelope.

Richie sighed and brought the beer to his lips. He took a few sips, bargaining with himself. One beer was just a beer. It wasn't what his parents did. It wasn't even comparable. When he set it back down on the table, his mom was lowering the letter.

"You got in?"

"They like me. Just like that sonuvabitch said they would," Richie took another few sips of his beer. The taste was awful, but in that way where once it faded, he wanted another just to prove it really was bad.

Her eyes flicked up to his. That sad smile never left her face. She tilted her head, straightened the hem of her shirt, and took a long drink. She finished her bottle.

"Well then," she said, her voice swelling with some kind of emotion Richie couldn't place. He would've been surprised to know it was *pride*. "I guess this is a celebration, then. Let me go get the good stuff."

"Mom, no—"

"Shoosh shoosh," Maggie headed into the kitchen, yelling back at him: "My baby boy is going off to college. We're going to get shit-faced!"

"Ah ah," Richie yelled after her, grinning from ear to ear. He tried on a new voice he'd picked up from a coworker. He thought of them as a young, slightly homosexual poet, with the tiniest forced English lilt. In his attempt to copy them, he wound up sounding more like Patrick Hockstetter. "You'll never get rid of me that easily." Then, in a normal voice: "I'm not going. Maybe in a few years, but right now—"

"I swear to God, Richie, do *not* fuck this up," Maggie's voice was soft, motherly, despite the harshness of her words. It hurt all the same. "I didn't raise you like that."

“Yeah, actually, you did,” the words came out before Richie could stop them. He straightened his back, listening to the bones crack and pop as they moved back into place. He was pulling one of his older voices from his repertoire, trying to mask the tremble trying to take over. “Ah say, ah say, raised the biggest fuck up this side of the Kenduskeag, ya did.”

Maggie chuckled. She muttered a small agreement as she came back to the couch, and handed him a shot glass full of something amber colored and tasteless. A million words fluttered in the back of his mind, and he thought about how he wanted to say all of them.

Hey mom, I'm afraid I'll forget. Or I'm afraid It's coming back. Or even please tell me you need me, because you're all I have left.

He didn't say any of them. Instead, he occupied his mouth by filling it with alcohol, tilting his head back as he swallowed it in one go. It shut everything up, like a liquid off switch.

The burn left him feeling centered. Maggie refilled his glass, and then clinked hers against it. They pressed their glasses against their lips, and threw their heads back at the same time.

Lather. Rinse. Repeat.

Six shots in, Richie's head was swimming, and he saw Betty as she'd been on that last day, before she went missing. Thirteen, her long legs in jeans and her curls looking more Farrah Fawcett than Stanley Uris; she stared down at the lower half of her body, and then curled her feet beneath her, giving Richie a quizzical glance. He looked at the shot glass, and then raised it to his eye.

Beer goggles, babe. Makes everyone look better.

Maggie poured them another shot. After it was added to the warm soup of their stomachs, she wiped her mouth. “You know, I don't think you'll be missed as much as you think.”

Richie inhaled sharply, and said, “Woooooow, thanks, *mommy dearest*.” He masked it in sarcasm, but he meant it. If he could've felt less than nothing, he would've. He realized that's how he knew he

reached the bottom of his emotional well.

“It’s the truth, though, isn’t it? How long has it been since you’ve actually hung out with your friends? You aren’t seeing anyone, and you’ll miss me about the same as I’ll miss you. There is *nothing* holding you here, sweetie.”

Richie pulled out an invisible microphone. His announcer voice was the best quality overall, and easiest to fall into. “Standing in this corner, weighing one-hundred-twenty-five pounds is three-time world champion, Tuh-tuh-tuh-TRASHMOUTH TO-JEE-ER.” He put his hands around his mouth, and hissed. It never really ever sounded like an audience cheering to him, but it was what everyone did. So he did it too.

His mother was shocked, at first, and then laughed. “And standing in *this* corner, weighing more than life itself, *homelessness in a strange place*,” Richie gestured to the acceptance letter. “I don’t know anything about California, ma. I don’t know *anyone* in California.”

“It’s not that hard of a decision: *Maine*, or California,” Maggie snorted. “If I could’ve dropped you and moved clear across America to someplace sunny, I would’ve. Imagine all those pretty young boys with their blond curls, like the beach boys.” Richie lowered his head, knowing what was coming next. “But Wentworth sure as hell wasn’t going to take care of you, and you can’t say I didn’t try. Because I *tried*, goddammit, and you’re going to college to pay me back for it.”

“Okay, but, money. I don’t have any.”

“I have a savings account, believe it or not, and since you’re my only heir...” she shrugged, letting Richie finish the sentence with understanding. He looked up at the ceiling, chewing his bottom lip.

“You need that—”

“The fuck I do,” she scoffed. “For what? Fixing the bathroom? I’ll let this hellhole be condemned before I invest another *penny* in it.”

Richie kept his head bowed. He shook the microphone once, twice, and then it was gone, replaced by a glass full of whiskey. Richie

swallowed it all at once, and grimaced. It made looking his mother in the eyes easier.

“What about taking care of yourself?” Richie asked. The look she gave him took the wind from his sails. She was dead already, and she knew it. Richie felt his heart and throat tighten. Maybe he didn't like her, but she was his *mom*.

“Like you care,” she said, as plain as if she'd said she wanted eggs. “This place is miserable, and so are you. Let me die terrorizing a nurse on insurance while you fuck a grandchild into some bimbo who looks too good for you.” He poured the next shot, but she took it from him. “You’ve had enough of this. Find your own poison, that’s my last bit of advice. You can’t just copy your folks, or you’ll never be better than them.”

She downed the shots one after the other. The room was small, and Richie was suddenly far too big for it. He felt like if he stayed any longer, it would just crush him. He stood up. The floor lurched forward, and Richie steadied himself. He opted to leave behind the car keys, and went out through the garage door. She didn't even ask him where he was going; he didn't even know.

Richie's bike wobbled to and fro as the world decided tonight was the night to shake ominously. Betty walked beside him, keeping pace like it was nothing. She did a little hop, and a twirl, smiling the whole time.

“It's been so long since I've had legs!” she said, her voice clear as day. “I could dance! Will you dance with me, Richie?”

Richie looked at her, and didn't answer. They traveled together until they reached Bassey park. Richie dropped his bike in the grass, and then reached out, taking Betty's hand. He almost felt it – warm and soft, *alive*. Taking her other hand, Richie leaned back and spun. The world became a dark blur, and as he howled, he heard Betty's surprised laughter. It was melodic, therapeutic, and just plain fun to hear. He spun until he felt the Chinese food coming back up, and had to go lean over the trash. Betty was laughing so hard she was crying. She fell to the grass, her legs trembling as much as Richie's. When he was done, he picked her back up.

Once upon a time, he'd gotten it in his head to learn the Lindy Bop. He never was good at it, missing as many steps as he hit. But he remembered how it was supposed to go. He and Betty looked like fools, but they didn't care. They laughed, and spun, and kicked their gangly legs to a beat only they could hear. It was easy to forget his worries in that moment, and pretend he was a normal kid, dancing with a gal in the moonlight.

When it was over, Betty was glowing, and Richie was breathless.

"Alright Trashmouth, I've gotta go. I guess I won't be seeing you around anymore," she said, sounding a little sad.

"Aw, you could always go haunt Mike. I think he'd like that," Richie said, feeling more than a little woozy. "Hey, hey, before you go, ask me that question. I have an answer for you assholes."

Betty didn't need to clarify what question he meant. With a little more humor and grace than usual, Betty asked him: "Why did *you* survive, Trashmouth, when so many others died?" She said that last word hard, clicking her tongue when she was done.

"Well, you see, God hates me," Richie flashed her a winning smile. It stretched his face painfully, and showed off the stains forming on the teeth in the side of the mouth he favored when smoking. "So he didn't want me up there with him. I just won't shut up, and you know, he has so many people to listen to. So even though nobody wants me down here either, not even my fuckin' mother, he's got the last word. So I'm practically immortal!"

Richie took a bow. Of all the things he expected, sympathy wasn't it. Betty gave his hand a little squeeze, leaving him feeling just a little better. She started to walk away.

"We should do this again!" He yelled after her. They both laughed then. "I'm free next Friday! Or any day, really." He put his hands on his hips. "Oh, except for Saturday two weeks from now... I'll be packing then. I'm going to California! Can you believe it? *California!* Maybe I'll meet Kevin Bacon and get him to sign my dick. I heard he's into that."

Betty clapped, and gave him a little yay. She twirled one final time, and then walked away. As soon as Richie blinked, she was gone. He didn't cry, even though he felt the tears building up. Instead, he sat and thought of all of them: Betty Ripsom, the future journalist; Eddie Corcoran, who was going to work on movies; Veronica Grogan, who could've been a model; Gard Jagermeyer and Moose Sadler, who were dumb as bricks but harmless overall; Peter Gordon, set to run his father's business; Steven Johnson, just a sweet lad; and Georgie Denbrough, who deserved to grow up. He even mentally poured one out for Victor Criss and Belch Huggins, who died trying to stop Henry, becoming heroes in the end.

Richie stared into the Kenduskeag. He pulled the pack of cigarettes from his pocket, and lit them up one by one. Once the pack was gone, Richie told himself, he wasn't going to get another. He owed it to every single one of those names to be better. He was going to live, and going to go to college in California, and eventually, one day, make television history by becoming the best damn ventriloquist the world ever saw.

His hands were shaking as he crumbled up the empty pack. Richie picked up his bike, and started his trek back home. After a few blocks, Richie was whistling, feeling, for once, excited about the future.

Author's Note:

The title is Latin for "Mind and Hand", and most of the referenced events were drawn from the book

Constructive Criticism is appreciated, comments of all kinds are much loved. This story was not beta or proofread.